



# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

July 14, 2005

The Honorable Mike Johanns  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns:

I am writing on behalf of Washington Concord grape producers and processors to bring to your attention the current surplus of Concord grape juice. I request that you consider reducing the Concord juice carryover through a bonus purchase for commodity programs administered by the Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS).

As you may be aware, my state is the nation's largest producer of Concord grapes – with most of our 371 growers operating in Central Washington. There are more than 13,000 acres of Concord grape vineyards in Washington, with an annual production valued at nearly \$25 million. Recently, members of my state's Concord grape industry brought to my attention their concerns with the large amount of Concord juice carryover from previous crops and early indications this year's crop could set a new record. If left unaddressed, this large surplus will further depress already low prices for Concord grape producers in my state and across the country.

In order to help resolve this situation, I am requesting the Agricultural Marketing Service work with the Concord grape industry to reduce the Concord juice carryover through a bonus purchase for the school lunch program. In previous years, bonus purchases for AMS commodity programs have proven to be effective means of stabilizing Concord markets. With the harvest of the 2005 crop around the corner, it is critical that steps to reduce the carryover be taken quickly. A bonus buy will not only help hundreds of growers in Washington, but also Concord growers in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Arkansas, Missouri, Indiana, and Michigan.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please keep me informed of the Department's efforts to support Concord grape producers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings".

Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress